LISTING OF CLAIMS:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Claim 1. (canceled)

Claim 30. (original) A method of preparing a mating surface and a feature defined by a wall that will mate with the mating surface to a specified sub-micron tolerance, the method comprising:

optimizing the size of at least one of the mating surface or at least part of the wall by uniform oxidization in a slow, controlled manner over a period of several hours until the specified sub-micron tolerance is achieved.

Claim 31. (original) A method of forming a female format connector comprising:

coupling at least one high-precision piece to a low precision piece to form a ferrule,

the low precision piece comprising a first and second alignment openings,

the at least one high-precision piece comprising a plurality of fiber holes, a first and second removable portions, and a third and fourth alignment openings at least in part disposed on the first and second removable portions,

the first, second, third and fourth alignment openings sized and positioned to provide accurate alignment between the high-precision piece and the low precision piece during coupling; and

modifying the third and fourth alignment openings after coupling.

Claim 32. (original) The method of claim 31 wherein the third and fourth alignment openings before modification are cylinders having a cross section of a first diameter and the third and fourth alignment openings after modification are cylinders having a cross section of a second diameter, larger than the first diameter.

Claim 33. (original) The method of claim 31 wherein the modifying the third and fourth alignment openings comprises changing the shape of the third and fourth alignment openings.

Claim 34. (original) The method of claim 31 wherein the modifying the third and fourth alignment openings comprises removing the first and second removable portions.

Claim 35. (original) A method of forming a female format connector comprising:

aligning a low precision piece and a high precision piece using a first and second alignment pins passing through a first, second, third and fourth alignment openings in the low and high precision pieces, the first and second alignment openings being in the low precision piece, the third and fourth alignment openings being in the high precision piece and being disposed at least in part on a first and second removable portions of the high precision piece, the high precision piece further having multiple fiber holes;

bonding the low precision piece to the high precision piece to form a ferrule;

removing the first and second alignment pins from the alignment openings after bonding the low precision piece and high precision piece; and

modifying the third and fourth alignment openings after aligning the low precision piece and high precision piece.

Claim 36 (original) The method of claim 35, wherein the third and fourth alignment openings are modified after aligning and bonding the low precision piece and high precision piece.

Claim 37. (original) The method of claim 35, wherein modifying the third and fourth alignment openings comprises making the third and fourth alignment openings larger.

Claim 38. (original) The method of claim 35, wherein modifying the third and fourth alignment openings comprises changing the shape of the third and fourth alignment openings.

Claim 39. (original) The method of claim 35, wherein modifying the third and fourth alignment openings comprises removing the first and second removeable portions to partially remove the third and fourth alignment openings from the ferrule.

Claim 40. (original) The method of claim 35, wherein modifying the third and fourth alignment openings comprises removing the first and second removeable portions to entirely remove the third and fourth alignment openings from the ferrule.